

**Ambassador Michael D. Kirby Speech at the MCC Press Conference
January 26, 2007**

First Deputy Prime Minister Greceanii, MCC Vice President for Operations Mr. John Hewko, Members of the MCC Delegation, Representatives of the Media,

I'm here today to bring Moldova two big messages. The first is congratulations. I want to congratulate Moldova on having been chosen as an MCA Compact-eligible country. As a current Threshold Program Country, you will begin to tackle difficult problems in the area of corruption. The Compact program is an additional chance to take a very large step toward greater development. Clearly, Moldova has a lot to be proud of.

My second message is a challenge. I call on Moldova to rise to the challenge that MCC Compact eligibility provides. It's time for Moldova to dream big and to work hard, because a successful proposal will lead to Compact status—and that will mean millions of dollars in development aid for Moldova.

My challenge is directed not only at the Government of Moldova but also at civil society and the people of Moldova alike. You will need everyone's dreams, intellect, and energy to get this process off the ground. You will need to form a working group composed of various sectors of government and civil society—one that can work for the overall good of Moldova. That working group will need to come up with a comprehensive proposal for developing Moldova—one that will transform Moldova by improving its infrastructure and developing its economic potential.

We want to see the Moldovan working group succeed at this task. But I can tell you now that it will not be an easy process. Countries that have gone through this process all know this. There will be many steps in the process, and negotiation between the MCC and the working group will be vital. But at the end of the road, if the proposal is a good one, and if the negotiations are successful, Moldova can achieve Compact status. And with this status will come generous funding—to make these projects become a reality.

The United States would like all of the country to benefit from this development program. The projects shouldn't be limited to large cities only; they should benefit rural areas as well. They shouldn't be geared to certain populations; all of Moldova's varied ethnic groups should see this as their program. The projects should not be limited to the right bank of the Nistru River; they should also include the left bank.

The United States is committed to Transnistria—as a part of sovereign Moldova—benefiting from this development program. For example, Transnistria could benefit from the same infrastructure improvements that the rest of the country might choose—but only if it decides to take an active part in this process. So I challenge leaders and civil society in the Transnistrian region to get involved in the discussions that will lead to a successful Compact proposal.

Sixty years ago, the United States was busy launching another great development program, the Marshall Plan. That plan, coming after the destruction and devastation of World War Two, was a compact for the rebuilding and development of Europe. That plan, like the Millennium Challenge Account, was predicated on a working relationship between the United States and the benefactor countries. The selected countries had to agree to the plan and to submit proposals that fit their needs and requirements. Those who participated found their economies soon recovering; those who, for various reasons, did not participate found their economies deteriorating.

Czechoslovakia is a perfect example. The leaders there wanted to participate in the Marshall Plan, because they wanted to see their country recover from war, rebuild its economy, and join a new Europe. But Stalin had other ideas. He told the Czech leaders that they were not to accept the aid from the Marshall Plan, saying that it represented "American imperialism." Czechoslovakia was kept out of the game, and its economy deteriorated, while participating European countries began a process of recovery.

Sixty years on, the parallels are quite striking. The region of Transnistria has the choice to become a part of the recovery—with the chance to receive millions in development aid—or it can opt out. We hope that Transnistria will choose to work with the rest of Moldova to reach out into the future.

I came today with two messages: one of congratulations and one of challenge. The challenge is what I want you to take home with you now. Dream big dreams for Moldova and formulate them into a workable proposal. Propose a meaningful, ambitious Compact proposal. And then use the funds to make Moldova all that you dream it can be.